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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 ANKARA 006489

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SUBJECT: EUR DAS LAURA KENNEDY MEETS TURKISH OFFICIALS TO
DISCUSS UPCOMING EU DECISION

Classified By: Ambassador Eric Edelman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: EUR DAS Laura Kennedy visited Ankara November 11-12 to discuss with Turkish officials the December 17 European Council decision on starting accession negotiations with Turkey. Kennedy met with Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Mehmet Dulger, MFA Deputy U/S for EU Affairs Volkan Bozkir, National Security Council General Secretary Yigit Alpogon, Secretary General for EU Affairs

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Murat Sungar and MFA Deputy U/S Ertugrul Apakan. Her meeting with MFA Deputy U/S Baki Ilkin on Aegean issues is reported septel. DAS Kennedy emphasized U.S. support for Turkey's EU membership and urged Turkish officials to take the necessary steps to ensure a positive decision. She explained that she had come from Brussels where EU officials, including Turkey's strongest supporters, considered it essential that Turkey conclude a protocol to the Ankara agreement to formalize the participation of new EU members (including Republic of Cyprus) in the EU-Turkey Customs Union. Turkish officials expressed varying degrees of disappointment with the European Commission report, complaining that Turkey was being discriminated against. Some Turkish officials insisted that the EU must correct certain problems in the report, such as the reference to the "open-ended process." On the protocol to the Ankara Agreement, all of the Turkish officials agreed that it was highly unlikely that the Turkish government would do as the Commission requested before December 17, but Alpogon and Sungar indicated that the government was prepared to take the step after December 17. The Turks also insisted that the Council's decision must be clear and set a reasonable date to start negotiations. End Summary

Turkish Parliament - Mehmet Dulger

2. (SBU) Mehmet Dulger, Chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, conveyed Turkey's appreciation for the long-standing U.S. support for Turkey to join the EU. &We know what is expected of us,8 he said, pointing out that Turkey has already taken significant steps to meet EU requirements. And these enormous changes have been easily accepted by the Turkish people. Nevertheless, Turkey wants to conserve what is special about Turkey) &We are not French.8 On the other side, many Europeans continue to fear Turkey. For some it is because of Turkey,s size) Turkey will increase the EU population by 12 percent and dwarf the smaller countries, such as Slovenia and Estonia. For other Europeans, it is historical prejudices. Dulger asserted that Turkey,s membership will mean that the EU states must examine their values. He emphasized that Turkey does not view accession as a choice between Europe and the U.S.

3. (C) Dulger was optimistic that the European Council would endorse the start of negotiations. However, he said that the Council should correct the reference in the Commission recommendation about &open-ended8 negotiations. He acknowledged that Turks are "hyper-sensitive" and do not fully understand European reasoning. Dulger said he recognizes that the negotiations will be long and difficult, adding that the Irish told him they did not want to remember their difficult negotiations.

4. (C) Ambassador Kennedy agreed that accession would not harm strong U.S.-Turkey relations and cited the UK as an example of an EU member with strong ties to the U.S. She stressed the importance of Turkey,s political leaders shaping public opinion, especially in regard to the Commission's reference to open-ended negotiations. She emphasized that the Commission's recommendation should not be viewed as discrimination but as differentiation, which reflects Turkey,s unique characteristics.

Foreign Ministry -- Volkan Bozkir

5. (C) Ambassador Volkan Bozkir, Deputy Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the EU offered the most detailed discussion and frank explanation of Turkey,s position on the Commission report and the December 17 Council decision. Bozkir said that the Commission report was less positive than

Turkey had expected, and he identified three pitfalls for the December 17 European Council decision: 1) The Council decision must be clear) not a decision for another decision; 2) The date to start negotiations must be clear and reasonable. 3) The Commission's reference to the &open-ended process⁸ must be replaced. He pointed out that the sentence following is even worse. (Note: Bozkir was referring to the sentence: &Regardless of the outcome of the negotiations or the subsequent ratification process, the relations between the EU and Turkey must ensure that Turkey remains fully anchored in European structures.⁸) Bozkir said the wording was &very bad⁸ and omitted mention of accession. He bitterly joked that the Commission's reference to European structures could mean the European Basketball Association.

16. (C) Ambassador Kennedy told Bozkir that the U.S. has advised the EU to avoid adding &cautionary language⁸ to its decision. She added that it is important that Turkey not turn a yes decision by the Council into something else. When questioned, Bozkir confirmed that Turkey cannot live with the current Commission language. &We have 41 years of experience with the EU; we have suffered a lot from vague wording and promises not kept.⁸ It is essential that the Council define at the beginning that the objective is membership, he added.

17. (C) Ambassador Kennedy told Bozkir that EU procedures are changing) the EU is applying lessons learned from earlier enlargements, and therefore, Turkey should not feel that it is being discriminated against. Bozkir countered that Turkey is being asked to do more than other candidates. For example, Turkey is required to solve any issues relating to the Customs Union before accession talks can start. For other candidates, the question of a Customs Union comes up in the course of the negotiations. In addition, the EU still does not endorse Turkey as a market economy but considers Romania a market economy. &This is a political -) not economic -- judgment.⁸

18. (C) Ambassador Kennedy told Bozkir that she had met earlier in the week with EU officials in Brussels and even Turkey,s strongest advocates in the EU insist that Turkey must sign an additional protocol to the 1963 Ankara Agreement that would include the Republic of Cyprus in the Turkey-EU Customs Union. Bozkir said the Commission sent them a draft protocol that included only Cyprus. He noted that Turkey has not completed protocols for new members such as Spain, Portugal, Greece, Austria, Finland and Sweden, but told the Commission that it was ready to start negotiations that would include all 16 new members) the earlier six plus the more recent ten. He added that Turkey announced this summer that 9 new members (not including ROC) were included in the Customs Union and issued another announcement in September to include Cyprus. (Note: Greek Embassy Counselor Efthymios Pantzopoulos told Econoff that the September notice referred to Cyprus, not the Republic of Cyprus, which is unacceptable, he said, to the Commission.)

19. (C) Bozkir said that Turkey will not meet the EU demand. We must first receive our answer from the December 17 Council decision, he said. &Politically, we cannot move; we will take that risk. This isn't news to the EU.⁸ He argued that Turkey has already made considerable concessions on Cyprus, while the EU has done nothing in return. When Kennedy pressed, Bozkir refused to reconsider and noted that: "When I say this (that Turkey cannot sign the protocol now, it is serious."

110. (C) DCM asked Bozkir about Turkey,s assessment of the positions of the EU member states. Bozkir said that Slovakia had not yet decided but the visiting Slovak FM believed their parliament would be positive. Despite public opposition, the Netherlands would not be a problem because of its role as current EU President. Austria is a headache, he added, but &let them decide.⁸ France &has its own dynamic,⁸ and the rest are OK. In the end, nothing is guaranteed, he concluded.

National Security Council - Yigit Alpogan

111. (C) EUR DAS Laura Kennedy and the Ambassador met with Turkey's first civilian NSC Secretary General, Yigit Alpogan, on November 12. DAS Kennedy congratulated Alpogan on his appointment and said she hoped to see him in Washington. Alpogan responded that he would be pleased to accept, and thought January might be a good time.

-- Association Protocol and Cyprus

112. (C) Ambassador Kennedy said that she wanted to compare notes about what countries were problematic on Turkey's beginning accession negotiations. On Cyprus, the US was

working to avoid the addition of any new conditions on Turkey and Washington was gratified that no such demands appear to be garnering support. However, she reiterated the constant message from Europeans on the need for a separate protocol to the Ankara Agreement.

113. (C) Alpogon responded that Turkey had taken the technical steps necessary following the accession of new members and did not think anyone in Ankara was of a mind to do anything more on Cyprus. Whatever Turkey does, "it won't satisfy the Greek Cypriots," he said. They will want more; "we don't trust them." He said that the GOT saw the request for the protocol as parallel to the idea heard in some quarters that Turkey should withdraw troops from the island. "A date will come if it comes." Turkey had met the Copenhagen criteria and wanted no additional conditions. Frankly, he continued, the feeling in Ankara is that the Turkish Cypriots continued to be punished including through blockage of EU regulations on aid and trade, and the Greek Cypriots continue to be rewarded for the situation on the island. The EU "broke its promises" on Cyprus, he said. The GOT wanted to see progress before moving on other fronts vis-a-vis Cyprus.

114. (C) Ambassador Kennedy reiterated that the protocol requirement had not originated with the Greek Cypriots but in Brussels and that the US did not see it as a concession to Nicosia. Alpogon believed that those advocating this step thought it would "soften up" Papadopolous, but that would not work, he stated. What Papadopolous was really seeking was Turkey's recognition of the GOC, withdrawal of forces and return of settlers. For its part, Turkey only wanted two things from the EU: 1) a decision to start accession negotiations based on objective criteria and on an equal basis with other candidates; and, 2) a definite date to begin negotiations in 2005. He was optimistic that the EU would do this.

115. (C) Alpogon said the EU faced a decision on what kind of Europe it wanted: a dwarf with no strategic vision that would simply be a Christian club, or a partner of the US that reaches out to the regions that surround it, such as the Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia. "This will be decided on December 17," he declared. If the EU leaders make the wrong choice, Turkey would turn the Copenhagen Criteria into the "Ankara Criteria" and continue with its reforms while maintaining a western orientation. Alpogon said the "yes" part of the decision on Turkey is important but insufficient without a date.

116. (C) Returning to the protocol, the Ambassador observed that the other 24 EU members were trying to discipline Papadopolous and were simply looking for a talking point that would allow them to tell him to pipe down. Alpogon said he understood, but even he was not convinced signing the protocol now was the right thing for Turkey to do. He said it would be sad if the EU passed judgment on Turkey's accession on this issue. He acknowledged the Ambassador's point that the EU would require Turkey to conclude the protocol before negotiations could begin. "It will be a new ball game" after December 17 if Turkey receives a date. He said the protocol is actually ready, but no one is prepared to move on it at this time. Kennedy and the Ambassador urged Ankara signal before December 17 that it was prepared to sign the protocol thereafter. Alpogon repeated that the atmosphere in Ankara was that Turkey owes nothing more, rather others owe Turkey (on ending the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots). In any event, "there are just five weeks more," he concluded.

--Keeping the Aegean Calm

117. (C) Turning to Greece, Ambassador Kennedy noted that Athens was unhappy over the recent USG decision to recognize the constitutional name of Macedonia. This had put the Greeks in a sour mood toward the US. Alpogon congratulated the US on this "courageous decision" that contributed to peace in the Balkans.

118. (C) Officials in Brussels had raised with Kennedy recent reports of aircraft incidents in the Aegean. She told Alpogon that the US, like Turkey, disagreed with the GOG's position on FIR and 10 NM territorial air claims. The US wanted the region to be calm and she was confident that Turkey would act in a statesman-like manner. Alpogon attributed the Greeks' complaints to their mistaken belief that Ankara would maintain the same low level of activity over the Aegean that it exercised during the Olympics until after the EU Summit in December. He said Turkish Air Force's return to pre-Olympics optempo had surprised Athens, but what was going on now was "the same old pattern" and not a big issue. He emphasized that Ankara remains committed to dialogue with Athens and, in fact, incoming and outgoing MFA Deputy Undersecretaries Ilkin and Apakan had just reached agreement with the GOG during their visit to Athens to resume meetings of bilateral committees working on various CBMs and

bilateral Aegean issues.

--Caucasus/Central Asia

19. (C) Alpogan asked Ambassador Kennedy for her assessment of new Russian bases in Tajikistan. The Kyrgystan base was clearly designed in response to the coalition base at Manas. Russia lacks resources, despite the Russian military's desire to return to the region. In Tajikistan, the Russians were not creating a new base, but consolidating the old 201st division that had existed there for decades. This should also be viewed in the context of the withdrawal of Russian troops from Tajikistan's borders; it was not a new deployment.

20. (C) Ambassador Kennedy suggested that Central Asia and the Caucasus were two regions where the US and Turkey should deepen their dialogue. Countries in the region could benefit from advice from outsiders that they trust. Both Turkey and the US wanted to promote the independence of these states, which usually meant breaking Russian monopolies' control over key infrastructure.

EU Secretariat -- Murat Sungar

21. (C) Murat Sungar, Secretary General for EU Affairs, told Ambassador Kennedy that the EU should not expect any more concessions on Cyprus before the December 17 Council meeting. Signing the protocol would be considered a concession, which would be very difficult for this government. It would be seen as Turkey recognizing Cyprus without receiving a yes from the EU. For the moment, we are refusing to talk about Cyprus as much as possible, he said.

22. (C) Sungar said that the government was disturbed by the Commission report, and there is still disagreement in the government about how we should interpret it. So far, we have used this process to correct a number of problems in Turkey. Unfortunately, some in Europe are trying to find pretexts to block Turkey. For example, the Christian Democrats in the Netherlands, Austria and Germany are raising objections based on a European Parliament report. And in Austria, they are still talking about 1683, when Turkish troops were at the walls of Vienna. Others see Turkey's membership as a Trojan Horse for U.S. or Islamic influence in the EU.

23. (C) In the end, the EU leadership realizes that it must find a way to satisfy Turkey, he noted. For example, a decision without a specific date would end our relationship with the EU. He advised that the Council should just reference the Commission's report. It will pose a big problem for Turkey if the Council restates some of the most objectionable language from the Commission report in its decision.

24. (C) Sungar said that Turkey will face considerable difficulties in the negotiation process. He expected that accession will be difficult for certain sectors in the economy and he thought that the country's employers might have second thoughts about joining once the implications of full membership become clearer. Turkey's bureaucracy faces serious challenges managing the process. The government is considering several schemes to get organized; however, we are not taking any action now. We don't want to appear presumptuous. He explained that it will be essential that the chief negotiator have sufficient political power to get things done in the government. It will also be important to implement a communication strategy to address European attitudes about Turkey.

Foreign Ministry - Ertugrul Apakan

25. (C) DAS Kennedy told Ertugrul Apakan, MFA U/S Designate, that the U.S. will continue close dialogue with Ankara on a range of issues. The U.S. is focused on quietly helping Turkey get an early date to begin negotiations and working to prevent imposition of additional Cyprus-related conditions before December 17. Kennedy informed Apakan Turkey's EU supporters had told her that it is important for Turkey to sign before December 17 an additional protocol to Turkey's Association Agreement even though it is not a legal requirement.

26. (C) Kennedy pointed out the protocol takes account of all ten new members, not just the ROC, and Turkey could supplement it with a side letter indicating no change on the GOT position on Cyprus, as it had upon signing the EU Constitution Treaty. This will merely formalize what Turkey has already done and would prevent the ROC from gaining support for its other demands. Cyprus Department Head Bilman asserted that the Greek Cypriots are demanding a bilateral protocol, not one with the Commission. DCM Deutsch said we

had not yet seen what the Commission is asking the Turks to sign, but if it is an agreement with all ten new members, it could be a good idea for the GOT to sign it. (Note: We e-mailed a copy of the draft agreement to the Department November 17; it is not a bilateral agreement. End Note.)

127. (C) Apakan pointed out the lack of normal trade relations between northern and southern Cyprus. Turkey wants all restrictions on both sides lifted, he said; this will facilitate overall settlement, which should occur in a UN framework, although the EU may contribute. Kennedy said the sides need to return to working on the Annan Plan after December, but the U.S. is now focused on getting to December 17. Turkey did everything asked of it on Cyprus; the U.S. does not expect more unilateral Turkish concessions on Cyprus before December.

This cable was cleared by DAS Laura Kennedy.
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